
'Yes' and 'No' Quickguide

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Introduction

'Yes' and 'no' are an important part of communication. We use these to accept/reject things, confirm information, make choices, and more.

Yes/No questions are close-ended (which require a lower demand on memory and vocabulary); are common; and provide valuable information such as the client's needs, wants, and understanding.

The meaning of yes/no changes based on the question:

- Yes can mean: 'Yes, I want this' or 'Yes, that is a cat.'
- No can mean: 'No, I don't want this' or 'No, that's not a cat.'

Requests (e.g. 'Yes, I want this') require a different level of comprehension to Labels (e.g. 'No, that's not a cat') where the client needs to understand what a cat and a question is.

Using 'yes' and 'no' are also important skills for partner assisted scanning (PAS), which some clients move on to for communication (e.g. using a PODD communication book with PAS).



Ways people say 'yes' and 'no'

People can say 'yes' and 'no' in different ways, for example by signing, pointing with their eyes/hands/other part of their body, verbally, nodding/shaking their head, using switches, and many more. The best way to work out what is going to be a good yes/no for your client is to talk to your Speech Language Therapist/ Occupational Therapist. Eye contact and smiles are not recommended as these can also mean the client is happy, nervous, or what's happening could be reminding them of something funny.



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The goal is for each person to have a reliable 'yes' and 'no' so that unfamiliar communication partners can easily understand your client's wants and needs - whether the client's partner checks a communication book first to see how the client indicates 'yes' and 'no' or if the client uses a widely understood gesture e.g. head nod for 'yes' and head shake for 'no'.

Yes/no lanyards

Getting started



- Wear 'yes' on your right and 'no' on your left. Consistency is key – **wear these all day, every day.**
- Model the way you want your client to respond. For example, if you are teaching the client to nod their head for 'yes', nod your head enthusiastically each time you use the word 'yes.' *Peers make great models too.*

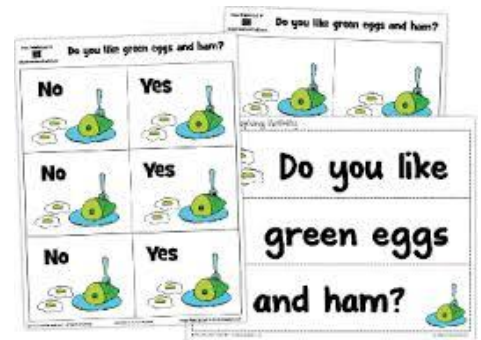
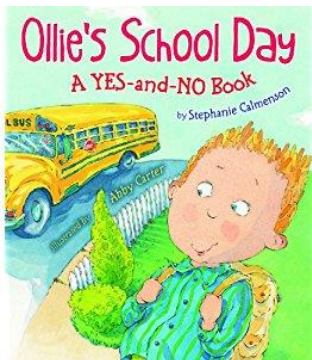
Teaching 'yes' and 'no'

- Start by asking 'request' yes/no questions using the client's motivation and offer items that are obvious favourites or dislikes to get clear 'yes' and 'no' responses e.g. "Do you want to go outside?"
- Follow through with the client's response and provide positive or social reinforcement (e.g. client says 'yes,' they want to go outside – take the client outside).
- Once the client has a good understanding of yes and no to request/reject items or activities, use a wider range of yes/no questions.

Provide lots of opportunities for the client to use 'yes' and 'no' throughout the day in all of their environments (e.g. home, school, respite etc.). This could be giving them a choice of activities, favourite ice cream, asking them about their day, sharing their feelings or other popular topics.

Useful resources

There are some great resources including books, songs and visuals to help engage clients with learning 'yes' and 'no' more or you can create your own as some fun for the whole group or family.



Here is a series of blog posts breaking down the learning process into simple steps. It also includes links to videos, books and other resources to help your client establish a reliable 'yes' and 'no':

<http://teachinglearnerswithmultipleneeds.blogspot.co.nz/2014/11/the-yesno-series-and-10-steps-to-teach.html>

Further help

If you need any further help, visit the above website or contact TalkLink.